

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 are now pending in the application. Minor amendments have been made to the specification to simply overcome the objections to the specification. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

SPECIFICATION

The specification stands objected to for certain informalities. Specifically, the Examiner has objected to the Abstract. As indicated above, Applicant has amended the Abstract according to the Examiner's suggestions. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 AND 103

Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Fenelon (U.S. Pat. No. 6,216,394, hereinafter "Fenelon '394"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1-5, 7 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fenelon '394 in view of Spaziani et al. (U.S. Pat. Publication No. 2005/0072049, hereinafter "Spaziani"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

At the outset, Applicant notes that claims 1, 4, 5, 7, and 8 have been amended to include "at least one rack guide feature including an aperture surrounding at least a portion thereof to facilitate forming of said rack guide feature." Claims 1, 4, 5, 6, and 8

have been amended to include “a slave gear hub portion configured to have a gear rotatably mounted thereon.”

Fenelon ‘394 does not disclose the claimed slave gear hub portion. Specifically, the portion of Fenelon ‘394 considered the “slave gear hub portion” by the Examiner is merely internal compartment 325 and does not appear to be capable of having “a gear rotatably mounted thereon,” as required by claims 1, 4, 5, 6, and 8. As indicated in Fenelon ‘394, a central shaft 326 joins each pinion gear 302, 304 to its respective driven gear 322, 324.” (col. 5, lines 12-14). As such, there is no teaching of “a slave gear hub portion configured to have a gear mounted thereon” formed as a unitary piece with the remainder of the bracket. Making the slave gear hub portion as a unitary piece with the remainder of the bracket simplifies the overall design by eliminating the metal insert spindle previously necessary in dual rack and pinion systems that utilized a shock absorber system on the drive pinions. The in-molding of the metal insert spindle added cost and complexity to the molding process. Therefore, claims 1, 4, 5, 6, and 8 should be in condition for allowance.

Spaziani does not disclose the “rack guide feature including an aperture surrounding at least a portion thereof to facilitate forming of said rack guide feature.” Applicant first submits that there does not appear to be any teaching in Spaziani of a rack guide feature formed as a unitary piece with the remainder of the bracket. Figure 12 in Spaziani appears to be a schematic view and the specification fails to suggest unitary forming of the guide features 1216, 1218 with the remainder of the bracket. Applicant therefore submits that there is no teaching or suggestion of this feature in Spaziani. Further, Applicant additionally notes that the amended features of claims 1, 4,

5, 7, and 8 requiring "an aperture surrounding at least a portion" of the guide feature is clearly not shown in or suggested by Spaziani. The aperture, as claimed, refers to elements 332 (see Paragraph [0087]) which facilitate the molding of fingers 306. Therefore, claims 1, 4, 5, 7, and 8 appear to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 2 and 3 depend from claim 1 and should be in condition for allowance for the reasons set forth above. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-8 are respectfully requested.

DOUBLE PATENTING

Claims 1-8 stand provisionally rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 as claiming the same invention as that of claims 45-52 of co-pending Application No. 10/550,766. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claims 1-8 stand provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over Claims 56 and 57 of co-pending U.S. Patent Application No. 10/550,766. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claims 1-8 stand provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over Claim 53 of co-pending U.S. Patent Application No. 10/550,766 in view of Pickles (U.S. Pat. No. 4,167,834, hereinafter "Pickles"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicant notes that Claims 44-63 of co-pending Application No. 10/550,766 were cancelled in the preliminary amendment filed September 27, 2005. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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